

Shea Block (Manchester Hotel)
50 West Central
Manchester
Hillborough
NH

HABS No. NH-120

HABS
NH,
6-MANCHA,
9-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SHEA BLOCK (MANCHESTER HOTEL)

HABS No. NH-120

HABS
NH,
6-MANCT
9-

ADDRESS: 50 West Central Street
Manchester, New Hampshire 03101

PRESENT
OWNER: Manchester Housing Authority

PRESENT
OCCUPANT: Vacant

PRESENT USE: Formerly single room residence hotel. Scheduled for demolition by
November 10, 1982.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Shea Block (or Manchester Hotel) is significant in the real estate development history of Manchester. It was built during the boom years prior to 1893 in an area of the city which was undergoing rapid development. Its association with the colorful personality of Timothy Shea was brief, yet Shea was an important figure in real estate development and construction in Manchester. He was the principal contractor for the excavation of the city's sewage system. More commonly known for his promotion and development of bowling alleys and a roller skating rink, Shea was an avid sportsman and long-distance runner.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1891.

2. Architect: unknown.

3. Original and subsequent owners: Recorded at Hillsborough County Record of Deeds, 19 Temple Street, Nashua, New Hampshire:

1888 Deed, April 14, 1888, recorded in Volume 506, page 275. Amoskeag Manufacturing Company to Michael A. Cavanaugh, James F. Cavanaugh, and Thomas F. Cavanaugh.

1890 Deed, October 1, 1890, recorded in Volume 572, page 537. James F. Cavanaugh, Michael A. Cavanaugh, and Thomas F. Cavanaugh to Timothy Shea.

1892 Deed, September 22, 1892, recorded in Volume 528, page 282. Timothy Shea to Rosecrans W. Pillsbury and Clinton A. Moore.

- 1892 Deed, October 1, 1892, recorded in Volume 528, page 283. Clinton A. Moore to John F. Moore.
- 1897 Deed, June 12, 1897, recorded in Volume 570, page 205. Rosecrans W. Pillsbury to William S. Pillsbury.
- 1897 Deed, June 14, 1897, recorded in Volume 61B, page 508. William S. Pillsbury to Annie W. Pillsbury. Recorded April 14, 1903.
- 1903 Deed, March 23, 1903, recorded in Volume 618, page 507. Annie W. Pillsbury and John F. Moore to Richard M. Barry. Recorded April 14, 1903.
- 1916 Deed, September 25, 1916, recorded in Volume 745, page 629. Richard M. Barry to John F. Moore and Rosecrans W. Pillsbury.
- 1917 Deed, July 30, 1917, recorded in Volume 753, page 269. Rosecrans W. Pillsbury to Mary Alice Watts.
- 1918 Deed, March 20, 1918, recorded in Volume 758, page 201. Mary Alice Watts to Rosecrans W. Pillsbury.
- 1922 Deed, January 20, 1922, recorded in Volume B01, page 394. John F. Moore to James Voliotopoulos.
- 1922 Deed, January 9, 1922, recorded in Volume 800, page 229. Rosecrans W. Pillsbury to James Voliotopoulos.
- 1922 Deed, January 16, 1922, recorded in Volume 800, page 228. William S. Boate to James Voliotopoulos.
- 1924 Deed, December 3, 1924, recorded in Volume 840, page 218. James Voliotopoulos to Phillip Jackman and Daniel R. Blanchard.
- 1924 Deed, December 1, 1924, recorded in Volume 83B, page 145. Phillip Jackman and Daniel R. Blanchard to Strafford Savings Bank.
- 1926 Deed, October 27, 1926, recorded in Volume B59, page 443. Phillip Jackman and Daniel R. Blanchard to Genevieve M. Lawlor.
- 1926 Deed, October 27, 1926, recorded in Volume 860, page 10. Genevieve M. Lawlor to Phillip Jackman and Daniel R. Blanchard.
- 1943 Notice of Foreclosure, July 6, 1943, recorded in Volume 1050, page 216. Notice of Foreclosure by Strafford Savings Bank on mortgage to Phillip Jackman and Daniel R. Blanchard.
- 1943 Attorney's Affidavit, July 14, 1943, recorded in Volume 1050, page 217. Attorney's Affidavit of Service of Notice on Foreclosure.

- 1943 Foreclosure Deed, July 23, 1943, recorded in Volume 1050, page 218. Strafford Savings Bank to Strafford Savings Bank.
 - 1944 Deed, March 11, 1944, recorded in Volume 1058, page 283. Strafford Savings Bank to Costas A. Flione and Nicholas A. Flione.
 - 1961 Deed, January 3, 1961, recorded in Volume 1631, page 192. Costas A. Flione and Nicholas A. Flione to Demetrios A. Simopoulos.
 - 1976 Deed, March 24, 1976, recorded in Volume 2585, page 77. Demetrios A. Simopoulos to Demetrios A. Simopoulos, Trustee of the Simopoulos Trust.
 - 1978 Certificate of Trustee, April 28, 1978, recorded in Volume 2613, page 697. Signed by Demetrios A. Simopoulos, Trustee.
 - 1982 Notice of Condemnation and Declaration of Taking, April 27, 1982, recorded in Volume 2915, pages 500-522. Transference of title to Manchester Housing Authority.
- 4. Builder: Timothy Shea (?)
 - 5. Original plans and construction: unknown.
 - 6. Alterations and additions: The building was originally designed to contain three stores on the ground floor. The principal alterations to the property include partial remodelling of three storefronts on the ground floor and complete remodelling on their interiors. Dropped ceilings have been installed. In the restaurant, the decorative pressed metal ceiling was covered but otherwise left undisturbed.

Storefront doors have been changed, and the radiussed corner entry opening has been reduced in size and original ornamentation removed. A wall advertisement for the laundromat has been painted on the east elevation wall at street level. Two projecting soft drink signs have been added to the second floors of the north and east facades.

A number of the residential suites have been remodelled, typically with plywood panelling or other contemporary wall finish.

- B. Historical Context: The Shea Block was part of the developing railroad area of the city adjacent to both the central business district and the manufacturing district on the Merrimack River. Its construction was related to the mercantile and transportation aspects of the area. Undoubtedly its corner location on Central and Franklin Streets made it an easily-reached destination for travellers.

II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The Shea Block is a four-story brick commercial block, square in plan with two principal facades, one facing West Central Street and

the other on Franklin Street. The facades are seven by nine bays and the building shares partial party walls with the Eagles Club to the west (58 West Central Street) and a narrow one-story structure, formerly a blacksmith shop, to the south.

1. Architectural character: Stylistically the building belongs to the Queen Anne Period, and it is a very understated commercial example of this stylistic expression which depends upon recessed brick panelled walls for its effect.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in sound structural condition and all finishes are in good repair.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Height, 44'; north facade, 60'; east facade, 60'.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: Construction material is water-struck red brick laid in English bond. On the north elevation the building's granite title block (Shea Block) is enframed within a flat brick panel where the cornice and entablature have been interrupted. A small parapet with flagpole behind surmounts this element and contains the two components of the date block (1891). The third story wall plane is recessed, and has corbelling which decorates the spandrel between floors. The wall planes of both north and east elevations are delineated with strip pilasters with corbelled caps supporting a modest partial entablature with corbelled brackets.
4. Structural system, framing: The building is of bearing-wall construction with a post-and-beam for the floors.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The south (rear) elevation of the building is six bays in width and contains a full-height steel fire escape which has been enclosed with wood to serve as a porch for each level.
6. Chimneys: There are two existing brick chimneys.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The old main entrance to the hotel lobby is at the radiussed corner. The door is flanked by two fluted, chamfered cast-iron columns. All other original materials have been replaced, however, by an aluminum and glass door and new side panels and transom. The east elevation contains two doorways on the southeast corner, one serving as the back stair for the residences on the upper levels and the other the rear entrance to the Coin-Operated Laundry which fronted on West Central Street. The two doors on the east facade are aluminum framed glass and not original, but the transom lights within the segmental arches above have not been altered.

The north elevation contains three storefronts, the easterly two being the old hotel lobby. The storefront entries are recessed and have transoms. Except for cast-iron columns, materials are not original. There are three doors. The central door to the upper floors of the hotel is of wood and glass. The other doors are aluminum and glass.

- b. Windows and shutters: All windows on the upper three stories are two-over-two double-hung sash. All window sills and the sill course which divides the first and second stories are rock-faced granite. Windows on the second and third floors have plain rectangular openings, while the apertures on the third floor are detailed with segmental relieving arches for window heads. Aluminum combination storm windows and screens have been added.

The ground floor has been altered. On the north elevation, all windows are aluminum-framed plate glass with two panes side-by-side.

8. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: Flat or valley, built up.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A modest molded cornice of sheet metal wraps the top of the east and north facades.

C. Description of Interior

- 1. Floor plans: The floor plan is square with L-shaped circulation on the upper three floors. See plans.
- 2. Stairways: The stairway is centrally placed with two flights of seven steps between floors. There are turned newell posts and balusters.
- 3. Flooring: The original wood floors have been largely covered by linoleum tiles.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are plaster and painted. Ceilings in the rooms are plaster and in the hotel lobby and halls of decorative pressed metal in a square pattern with fleurs de lis and rectilinear elements.
- 5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Doorways are trimmed by fluted frames and corner blocks with pateras. Doors are four panelled; wood.
 - b. Windows: Windows have frames similar to the doors. There is a skylight in the roof which serves to illuminate the stairwell naturally.
- b. Decorative features and trim: In addition to those features already described, the ceiling perimeters are adorned with pressed metal egg and dart moldings.

7. Hardware: Window hardware is original and decorated. Door hardware is mixed and undistinguished.
8. Mechanical equipment
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Oil-fired hot water heating. No central air conditioning or ventilation.
 - b. Lighting: Electrical.
 - c. Plumbing: Two shared toilets at south end of hallway. Two shared shower stalls in easterly hallway; sinks in rooms on each of the upper three floors.
- D. Site: The building occupies the entirety of a square site (60' x 60') which is oriented exactly to the requirements of a north-south grid.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Interviews

1. Demetrios A. Simopoulos, building owner, April 8, 1980

B. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Manchester, New Hampshire, New Hampshire Room, Manchester City Library; "Kibbe's Scrapbooks," Vols. 33 and 69 (Mirror and American clippings, January 14, 1891 and January 22, 1906).

2. Secondary and published sources

Hurd, D. H. & Company, comp. Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire. Boston: Hurd and Company, 1892.

Manchester Board of Trade. Board of Trade Journal (1892). 1:1:19.

Sampson and Murdock Co., comp. The Manchester Directory. 51-80: various pages. Boston: Sampson and Murdock Co., 1916-1945.

C. Supplemental Material

1. National Register eligibility research
Prepared by: Christopher Closs, Consultant, Manchester Housing Authority, 1980. This research report is an extensive and thorough investigation of the Shea Block and constitutes the basis for the document in hand.
2. State of New Hampshire--NHDPWH/U.S. Department of Transportation.

3. United States Geological Survey Manchester Quadrangle N.H. 15 Minute Series.
4. Granite Street Site Project
Property Line Map/February 7, 1980/ Manchester Housing Authority/Thomas F. Moran, Inc., Bedford, New Hampshire 03102

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

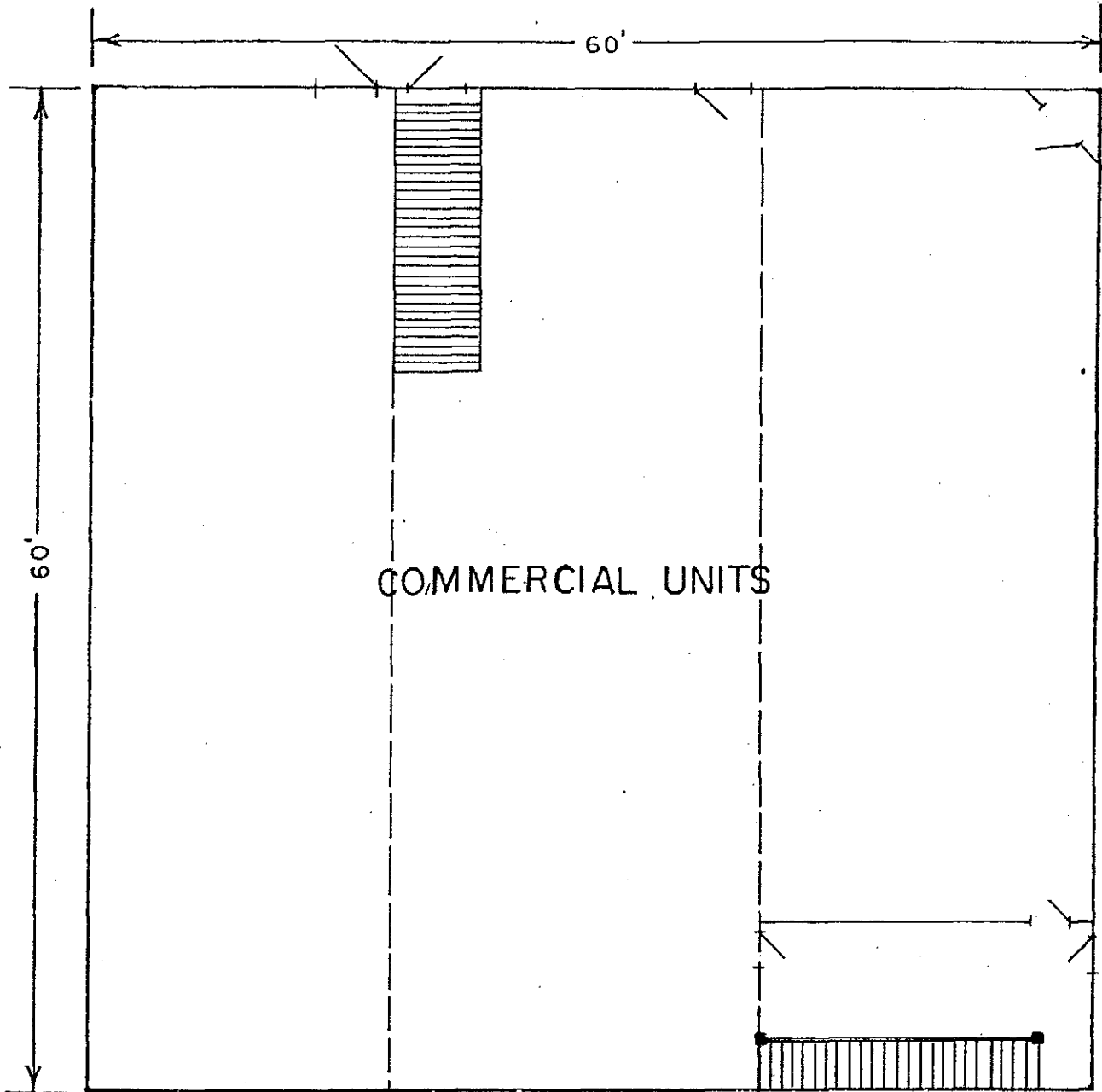
The Shea Block is to be demolished as part of the Granite Street Development Project in Manchester, New Hampshire. Part of the funding for the project is an Urban Development Action Grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. This Federal involvement triggered the Section 106 review process which resulted in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) being executed in May, 1981 between the City of Manchester and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Stipulation IV of the MOA allowed for the demolition of three of the five National Register Eligible buildings in the project area after documentation to Historic American Building Survey standards (formerly National Architectural Engineering Record). The Shea Block is one of those buildings.

Of the other two historic buildings, one is not to be acquired as part of the redevelopment and the other is to be incorporated into the project. The project includes a hotel, ballroom, convention center, office building, retail mall, bus station, public parking garage, public park, and street realignment.

Documentation prepared by Vision, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts for the Manchester Housing Authority. Participants were Michael Robinson, AIA, AICP; Lance Neckar; and Stephen Wheeler.

Documentation prepared on October 8, 1982.

W. CENTRAL STREET



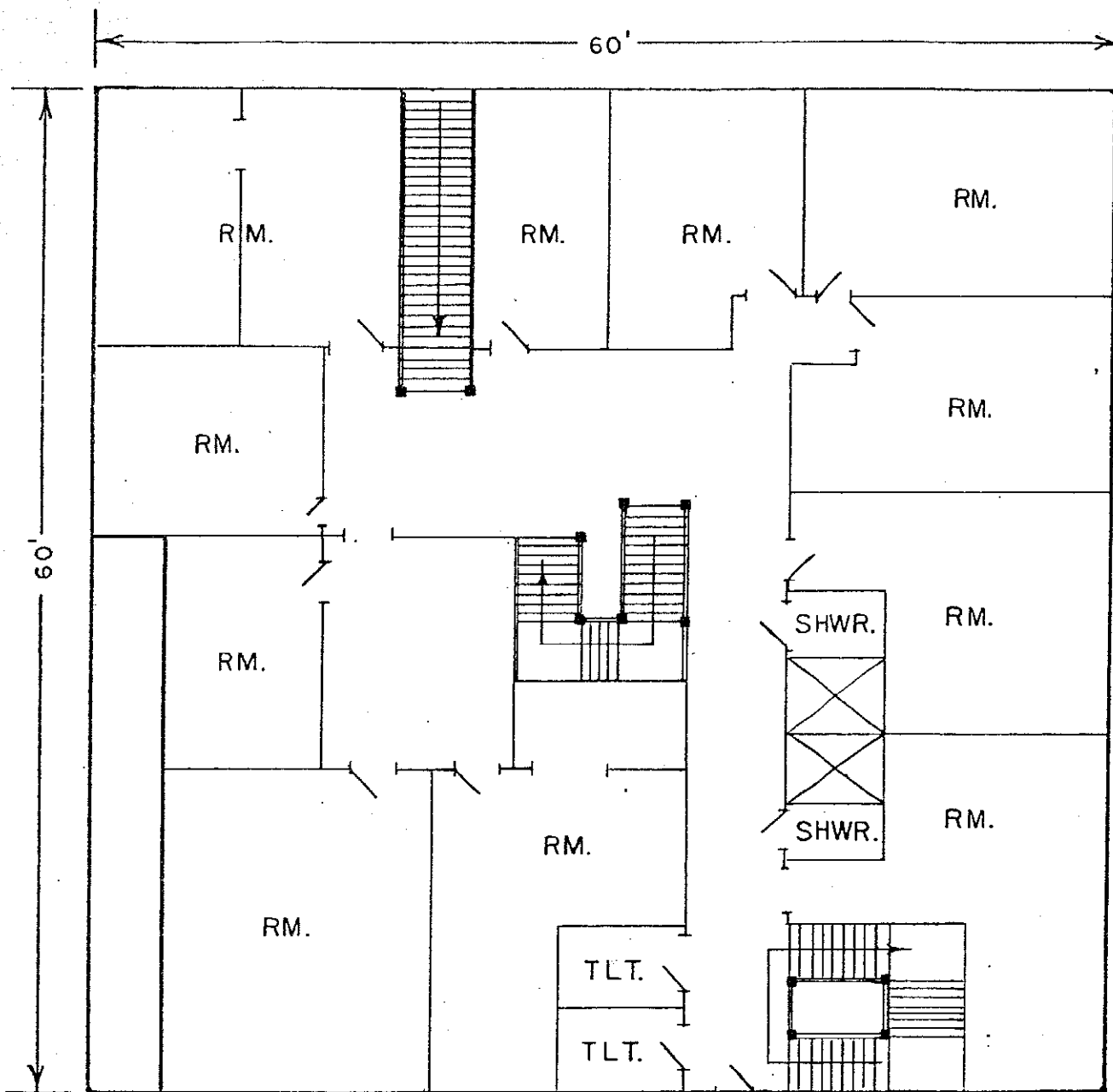
1st. FLOOR

FRANKLIN STREET



SHEA BLOCK
50 W. CENTRAL STREET
BLOCK NO. 633
PARCEL NO. 7

W. CENTRAL STREET



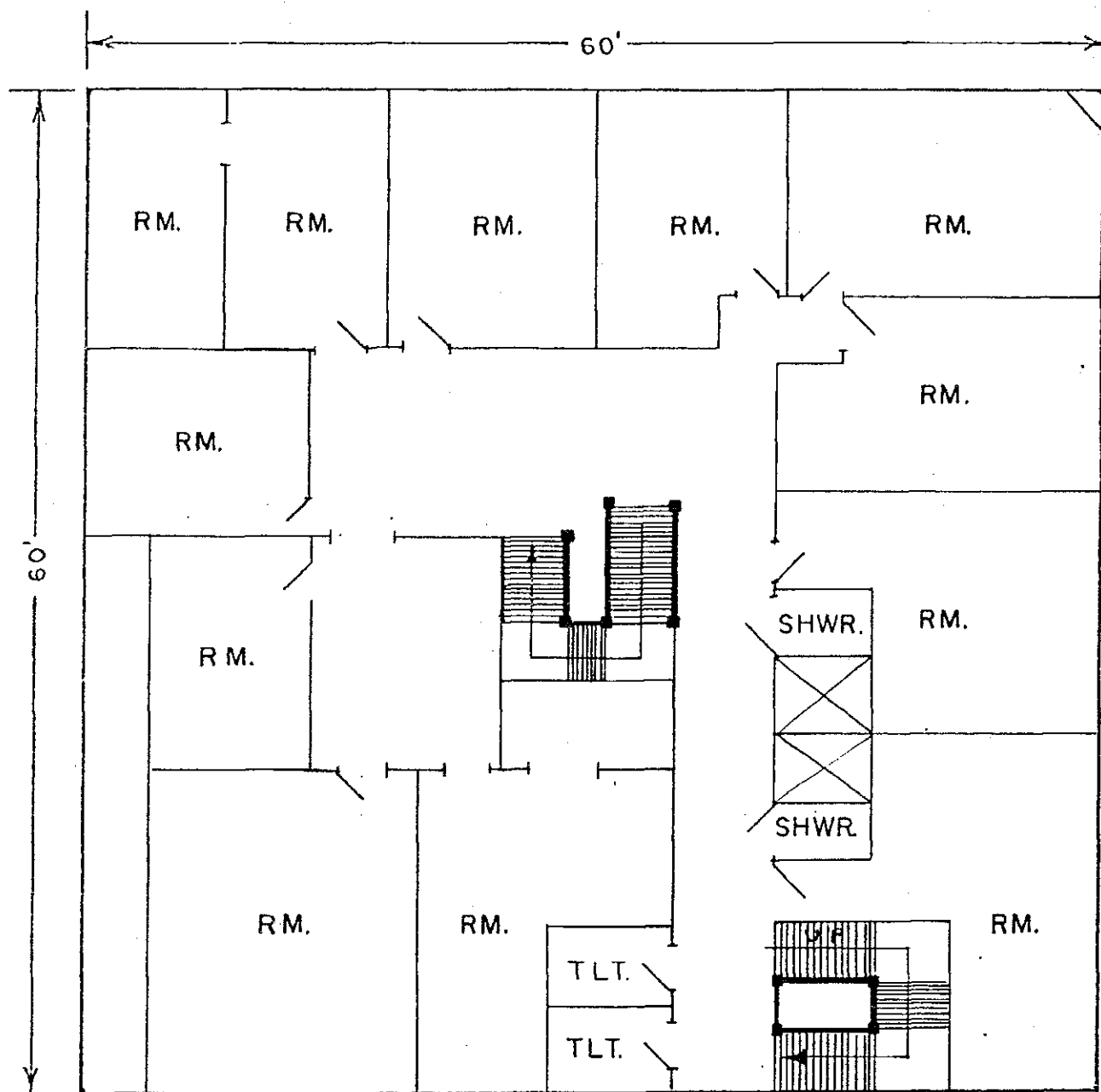
2nd. FLOOR

FRANKLIN STREET



SHEA BLOCK
50 W. CENTRAL STREET
BLOCK NO. 633
PARCEL NO. 7

W. CENTRAL STREET



3rd.FLOOR

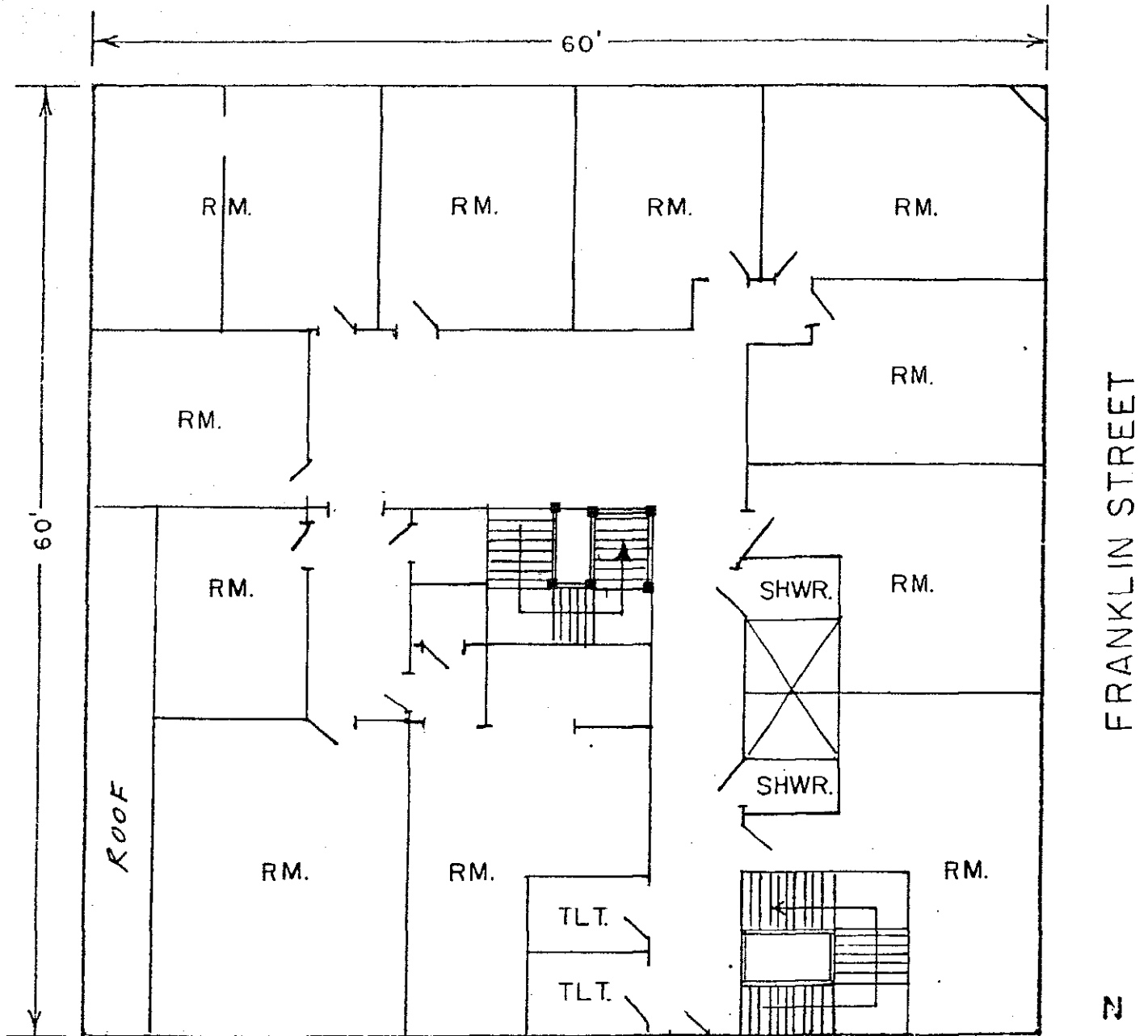
FRANKLIN STREET

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SHEA BLOCK
50 W. CENTRAL STREET
BLOCK NO. 633
PARCEL NO. 7

W. CENTRAL STREET



4 th. FLOOR



SHEA BLOCK
50 W. CENTRAL STREET
BLOCK NO. 633
PARCEL NO. 7